

Good Morning

I am Eleanor YellowRobe a 2010 Indian Equity Fund recipient. I am truly thankful to be a recipient of the grant. With the funds, I started my own business Native Assets Accounting and Consulting. It is an accounting services business that provides services to small businesses and Tribal entities.

I am here to offer my support for the continuation of the program for Montana Native Americans. The program not only benefits individuals but has a profound effect on Montana's economy as well.

I won the at large category of the competitive grant. I am an enrolled member of the Gros Ventre Tribe of Fort Belknap. However, I live on the Rocky Boy Reservation. There are two grants that are competitively awarded for recipients who are enrolled on each of the reservations and one awarded to a Native American who may be starting a business elsewhere in the State. I won this category.

Without it I may not have found the resources to start the business, as soon as I was able to, without the grant. Since I lived not on my own reservation, I was even more limited to job opportunities and access to capital. I went back to school to specifically get the credits necessary to get a CPA to start an accounting business as this is my goal. But without access to capital, this is an enormous obstacle to overcome in starting a business. This is true for all Montanan's, but it is an even greater obstacle for Montana's Native Americans.

We are especially limited to access to capital due to the way in which land and home ownership is held on reservations. With my husband, we own our own home and the land in which we live on, but no commercial bank will allow us to use it as equity for a loan. They prefer to not deal with it. Without equity, one doesn't have credit opportunities to start a business. This grant provides the opportunity for individuals such as myself, the access to credit leveraging or enough to start a business. In my case, it

was enough to start my business. I did not need to use the funds to leverage the bank for additional funds.

These funds have given me the opportunity for the American Dream of business ownership. It has allowed me to be self sufficient. I am able to earn a living doing something I enjoy. I have been in business for a year now and am growing at a manageable rate that will allow me continued success. Growth is occurring where I am in the planning process of hiring an additional staff member. The funds that started my business will affect the greater economy as I will be able to offer employment to another underemployed person.

The benefits of the Indian Equity Fund to the State of Montana are important. It provides:

- Funds to start a business to a population who has little or no access to capital.
- Self employment for people in a limited economy.
- Job creation for other underemployed people.
- Contributes to the local reservation economy.
- Contributes to the larger Montana economy.

In closing, I would like to thank you personally for funding the Indian Equity Fund as it allowed me to the opportunity to become a business owner in the state of Montana. I encourage you all to continue to fund the program to allow other fellow Montanan's who have the ambition to become business owners the opportunity to become productive members of our great state.

Thank you.

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